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DRS /Division of Research
Soviet Europe, OIR/-WP-20
March 23, 1951SOVIET REACTIONS TO US-SPONSORED JAPANESE TREATYI. THE SOVIET POSITION ON A JAPANESE PEACE TREATYA. Procedure

The USSR insists that the Potsdam Agreement of August 2, 1945, which established the Council of Foreign Ministers, provides the procedural basis for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan. Specifically, the US, the USSR, the UK, and China should prepare the initial draft, which should then be submitted to other interested powers for endorsement. Moscow outlined this position in several notes to the US in 1947. At the Paris session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in 1949, Moscow slightly modified the position to include France as one of the drafting powers. However, the Soviet Union reverted to its original position on March 4, 1951, when Izvestiya endorsed a resolution calling for negotiations by the original four powers issued by the Soviet-sponsored World Peace Council (WPC) on February 26. Furthermore, the WPC resolution stated explicitly that "China" refers to the People's Republic of China.

B. Content

Moscow has indicated that a Japanese peace treaty should contain the following minimum provisions:

1. Occupation troops must be evacuated. The Soviet aide-memoire of November 20, 1950, to the US asserted that "Point 12 of the Potsdam Declaration provides that occupation troops should be withdrawn from Japan." The WPC resolution explicitly demanded that "upon signing the peace treaty, the occupation forces must be immediately withdrawn."

2. Japan must be demilitarized. Moscow has repeatedly asserted that Japan has not been demilitarized. It insists that a treaty must provide for such demilitarization, which it clearly envisages to include both military and economic phases. A Soviet proposal to the Far Eastern Commission on September 3, 1948 demanded that the "revival and

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creation of Japanese war industry should be prohibited" and envisaged a post-treaty control body to include the USSR and to supervise this decision. At the same time, the USSR purported to be completely in accord with the development of "peace-time" industries. Moscow has not referred to reparations for several years but has insisted in the past that reparations must come from assets within Japan and that Soviet seizures of assets in Manchuria and Korea as war booty are not subject to discussion.

3. Territorial questions merely require ratification. The Soviet Union insists that its possession of the Kurile Islands and South Sakhalin was settled by the Yalta Agreement of February 11, 1945, while Chinese possession of Formosa and the Pescadores was settled by the Cairo Declaration of December 1, 1943. On the other hand, the disposition of the Ryukyu and Bonin Islands constitutes no problem since, according to the Soviet aide-memoire of November 20, "neither the Cairo nor the Potsdam Declaration states that [they] must be withdrawn from Japanese sovereignty." The aide-memoire also indicated opposition to US trusteeship of these islands. Soviet references to the Cairo and Potsdam decisions imply, therefore, that the treaty should merely ratify existing agreements as to territorial disposition.

4. Japan should be "democratized." The USSR believes that the Japanese people should be guaranteed a "democratic peaceful life." In so guaranteeing, a treaty should provide for the trial of more war criminals, including the present Emperor, elimination of the Zaibatsu, more land reforms, and other political and administrative reforms that would facilitate the increase of Soviet influence in Japan.

II. REACTIONS TO US DRAFT TREATY

A. Although the USSR has not yet reacted to the US draft treaty submitted on March 30 to the interested powers, it will reject the bilateral procedure and will insist upon an approach which reflects the position outlined in Section I. It will especially stress:

1. The US move is part of an American plot for remilitarizing Japan and establishing it as a base for further US aggression.
2. The exclusion of Communist China.

B. The world Communist campaign -- already being accelerated -- against US plans will be further intensified. The WFO resolution of February 26 indicated the scope and nature of this campaign when it called for a plebiscite in Asia, America and Oceania "on the remilitarization of Japan and conclusion of a peace treaty with a demilitarized and peaceful Japan," condemned "all attempts to conclude a separate peace with Japan," and envisaged the early convocation of a regional conference of "friends of peace" for the undefined purpose of "really ensuring a peaceful solution of the Japanese question, in order thereby to dispel the serious danger of war in the Far East."

C. The USSR and Communist China will renew threats of counteraction. In their propaganda, both Moscow and Peiping have strongly implied that the conclusion of a separate treaty -- as the US effort would be characterized -- would lead to a situation in which the Sino-Soviet pact would be applicable. This treaty provides that the signatories will "adopt all necessary measures" to prevent a repetition of Japanese aggression.

D. Threats of economic pressure will be particularly emphasized. Chinese Communist propaganda in particular has stressed that a separate treaty would be "economically disastrous" for Japan because "Japan's economy is a component of the Asian, not the American, economy."

E. Moscow will probably charge the US with attempting to present the world with a fait accompli. Communist propaganda, in critical fashion, will probably link the US move with the current discussions of CFM deputies.

F. Moscow will increase its efforts to complicate US foreign relations particularly with non-Communist nations in Asia that are trying to occupy a neutral position between the US and the USSR.

III. REACTION TO THE CONCLUSION OF SEPARATE TREATIES

A. In addition to a continuation of the measures outlined in Section II, Moscow would declare that it does not recognize the validity of these treaties and is in no way bound by any of their provisions.

B. The USSR, however, has probably already discounted bilateral US-Japanese arrangements and would not consider the formalization of these arrangements in a treaty as sufficiently important in itself to justify action beyond that indicated in III (A) above.

C. Soviet concern over Japan centers not in the treaty issue as such but in Japanese rearmament. Any concrete action that it might take would be in response to what Moscow considered dangerous developments in the revival of Japanese military power, whether or not these were accompanied by a separate treaty. Even here, however, a degree of Japanese rearmament has almost certainly been discounted and the Kremlin would not feel under compulsion to act over this issue unless progress were such as to pose a serious threat to the Soviet-Chinese power position. Even then, a decision to resort to military action would depend on a number of outside factors.

D. It is of course entirely possible that the USSR has already decided to undertake military ventures which would involve Japan. If so, bilateral US-Japanese understandings might be seized upon as propaganda justification for such adventures. If, however, the USSR has reached such decisions it would not be deterred from executing them by the lack of a justification of this type.

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